The starting point of this essay is Kant’s surprising remark that “it is not the case that a good state constitution is to be expected from inner morality; on the contrary, the good moral formation of a people is to be expected from a good state constitution” (ZeF, AA 08: 366). The statement is at odds with the familiar assumption that Kant’s philosophy is preoccupied with inner morality rather than external circumstances; that true reform has to start with our inner lives, not with politics. In this essay, I want to show that Kant’s remark is not some odd side note, but part and parcel of a coherent pedagogical theory, whose widely ignored ramifications deserve more attention. In addition, it helps us to rethink Kant’s relationship to the republican tradition.

This essay argues that a widespread interpretation of Kant as a typical early liberal is an oversimplification. Especially because of Rousseau’s influence, Kant is close to the republican tradition, even though he does not share key features. Kant’s pedagogy is indeed distinct from the educational theories of the civic republicans: First of all, moral self-legislation and self-motivation ultimately aim at a cosmopolitan conduct of thought (Denkungsart) and a cosmopolitan comportment of mind or disposition (Gesinnung), thus going beyond civic humanism’s focus on one’s own republic. Secondly, Kant takes a detour: in his moral theory, cosmopolitan values are not simply instilled or inculcated in pupils. A cosmopolitan disposition is a long-term result of helping adolescents to form their own moral characters. Yet Kant shared with civic republicans, especially with Rousseau, the conviction that education was indispensable for morality and virtue; subscribed to their belief in law’s educational function; and held that a republic – or rather the republican form of government – was the proper basis of moral formation. A final section outlines Kant’s vision of progress in a genuine republic.

In a previous article I have defined cosmopolitanism as the belief or the theory that all humans, regardless of race, gender, religion or political affiliation belong to, or should belong to, one single community, and that this global
community should be enhanced and promoted. I distinguished among various forms of cosmopolitanism, namely epistemological, economic or commercial, moral, religious, political, and cultural versions. There is a three-part division in Kant’s philosophy concerning the concept of the highest good and the future of humankind: The foundation of a cosmopolitan condition of perpetual peace, a global legal society of peaceful states, and finally a world republic is the highest political good (this is his cosmopolitical vision). The establishment of a global ethical community is – secondly - the highest moral good in this world. Finally, the highest good proper coincides with the transcendent kingdom of God, the intelligible world, the kingdom of Heaven or a moral realm. In Kant’s account, God and humans together try to realize the ethical commonwealth, with humans promoting (befördern) and “preparing” it while God is believed to offer fulfilment (attainment, realization or Verwirklichung). Together with the process of Enlightenment, the public use of reason, the development of a “cosmopolitan perspective”, for instance, in historiography, together with religious as well as domestic political reforms and reforms at the international level, moral cosmopolitan education is part of this human attempt to promote the highest moral good in this world. Moral cosmopolitanism is stressed in moral education or formation (Bildung), for instance in Lectures on pedagogy, where Kant claims that the young student should be helped to cultivate “philanthropy towards others and then also cosmopolitan dispositions”, which entails “an interest in the best for the world” (Päd, AA 09: 499), which I read as a shorthand of the concept of the highest political and moral good in this world.

When referring to the republican constitution or commonwealth in this essay, I have the ideal – the respublica noumenon – in mind; Kant frequently states that the republic as we find it in experience can only approach this ideal. He concedes that also a monarchy can follow the “spirit of republicanism”, that is, adhere to the republican form of government or “manner of governing”:

The constitution may be republican either in its political form or only in its manner of governing, in having the state ruled through the unity of the

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1 G. Cavallar: Cosmopolitanisms in Kant’s philosophy. In: Ethics and Global Politics 5 (2012), pp. 95-118. - All references to Kant’s works are in accordance with the Akademie-Edition of Kant’s Gesammelte Schriften, Berlin/Leipzig, 1902-. References to the Critique of Pure Reason follow the customary pagination of the first (A) and second (B) edition. The English translations are from the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992-.

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sovereign (the monarch) by analogy with the laws that a nation would provide itself in accordance with the universal principles of legality (SF, AA 07: 88).

At the same time he makes it clear that even a monarchy that governs in a republican manner is only of provisional legitimacy and has a duty to reform itself towards a representative republic. This republic by definition adheres to the republican form of government, even though it can always degenerate into despotism (ZeF, AA 08: 350-3, MSRL, AA 06: 340-1, ZeF, 07: 91).

I. The republican tradition and the Kantian republic

According to a widespread interpretation, Kant was a typical early liberal. Frederick Beiser, for instance, asserts that “the diabolic Kantian republic required no education at all”3 This assessment is based on the juxtaposition of the liberal tradition and the republican tradition of Machiavelli, Harrington, Montesquieu, Fletcher and others. Representatives of the republican or civic humanist tradition emphasized virtus, vertu politique or civic virtue and the political participation of citizens. Civic humanists or civic republicans were extremely worried about the threat of corruption, caused by citizens who put private interests above the common good, or material concerns above civic virtue. Traditionally republicans emphasized the importance of public education to foster the desired political virtue, in particular the willingness of citizens to sacrifice their own lives for the fatherland.4 Early liberals, on the other hand, emphasised enlightened self-interest and – so the story goes – saw the active cultivation of virtue by the government as an infringement of the rights of citizens, as an intrusion into the private sphere. This juxtaposition of republicans and early liberals is perhaps fraught with oversimplifications; the alleged incompatibility of the two “camps” in the eighteenth century is perhaps a myth.5 Be that as it may, I claim that it is highly dubious to assign Kant to the camp of the early liberals, in particular

because of Rousseau’s influence. Kant was a republican of sorts.6

The distinction between and separation of the moral from the legal sphere has often been seen as “typically liberal” – and highly problematic – in secondary literature.7 There can be no doubt that the distinction is a cornerstone of Kant’s system. In the 1790ies, for instance, he distinguished philosophical chiliasm – which was political and included the highest political good, namely perpetual peace and a world-republic – from theological chiliasm, which believed in “the completed moral improvement of the human race” (RGV, AA 06: 34). The clear distinction between the moral and the legal/juridical sphere seems to undermine any theory of political or cosmopolitical education. The separation of right and ethics implies the differentiation between juridical legality and morality. Things were easier for the civic republicans here: personal virtue overlapped with civic virtue, and this was identical with the activities of the citizen in the commonwealth.

I want to argue that while legal and moral spheres are distinct and Kant kept them separate, he held that they might mutually influence each other, and contribute to a dynamic process. Kant’s reasoning can be reconstructed as follows:8

1. All duties of right (such as keeping a promise) are also duties of virtue, even though “ethical lawgiving … cannot be external” (MSRL, AA 06: 220).
2. Right is independent of the good will of citizens, since it relies on coercion of external behaviour, not on moral dispositions (cf. MSRL, AA 06: 232). Coercion guarantees that legal norms are obeyed.
3. Obedience to legal norms has to be distinguished from their possible legitimacy.
4. In order to be of lasting efficiency, legal norms are in need of the “feeling of respect for the […] law” (KpV, AA 05: 75); the generic moral feeling is its basis (KpV, AA 05: 75, 80, GMS, AA 04: 460, MSTL, AA 06: 399-400).
5. A government is not entitled to enforce this inner dimension. “[W]oe to the legislator who would want to bring about through coercion a polity directed to ethical ends! For he would thereby not only achieve the very opposite of ethical ends, but also undermine his political ends and render

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them insecure” (RGV, AA 06: 96). The ethical commonwealth has its own laws and ways to promote obedience distinct from the political community.

6. Political communities have a legitimate desire to ensure compliance (cf. ibid. AA 06: 95), may promote formation or Bildung, a moral mode of thinking and so on with non-coercive means. The end result may be “a polity directed to ethical ends”.

7. The tension between coercing external obedience to legal norms and relying on moral dispositions cannot be avoided; it can only be softened by civic education.

8. Civic education should be in agreement with humanity’s vocation (Bestimmung) to form a “cosmopolitical unity” (Anth, AA 07: 333).

9. The republican constitution itself has a pedagogical function (see below).

The key passage is Kant’s claim that “it is not the case that a good state constitution is to be expected from inner morality; on the contrary, the good moral formation of a people is to be expected from a good state constitution” (ZeF, AA 08: 366). The good state constitution Kant refers to is the republican constitution of the first definitive article (see ZeF, AA 08: 352-3).

II. Cosmopolitical education according to Kant

Traditionally, civic republicans emphasized the importance of education. Whereas despotic forms of government usually relied on fear, Montesquieu famously claimed, republics had to foster a sense of community, a willingness to sacrifice one’s interests in the name of the whole, among its citizenry. He distinguished among despotism which is based on fear, monarchies relying on honour and republics aiming at virtue. As a consequence,

it is in a republican government that the full power of education is needed. [...] political virtue is a renunciation of oneself, which is always a painful thing. One can define virtue as love of the laws and the homeland. This love, requiring a continuous preference of the public interest over one’s own produces all the individual virtues; they are only that preference.10

The key goal was inculcating pupils with this form of republican patriotism. Rousseau followed suit. He also defined political virtue as the renunciation of

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9 See for instance Moran, Community and Progress, pp. 230-40.
oneself on behalf of the community. For him, the true patrie was a republic, characterized by freedom, equality, and the rule of law. The goal of republican education was transforming a mere aggregate of selfish individuals – as in commercial society – into a “moral and collective body”. Patriotism and civic virtue coincided, and integrated *amour de soi* and *amour propre*. Rousseau’s pedagogy usually relied on “inclination, passion, necessity” and appealed to the pupil’s emotions. Yet he also offered passages that came close to a Kantian understanding of morality.

Kant’s pedagogy is distinct from the educational theories of the civic republicans, and, for that matter, from standard theories of the “pedagogical age”, the eighteenth century. First of all, he distinguished between morality and virtue or the “strength of soul” (Anth, AA 07: 293; see also RGV, AA 06: 57, MSTL, AA 06: 380). Secondly, moral self-legislation and self-motivation ultimately aim at a cosmopolitan conduct of thought (*Denkungsart*) and a cosmopolitan comportment of mind or disposition (*Gesinnung*). This is our supreme or highest-order maxim, the “subjective ground” as a deed of our freedom (Rel, AA 06: 21), the “ultimate ground and justification of our actions” relating to our character, the overall orientation concerning our lives’ conduct. Third, Kant takes a detour: in his moral theory, cosmopolitan values are not simply instilled or inculcated in pupils. Autonomy cannot be trained like a skill, and manipulation or indoctrination has to be avoided at all costs. Morality is not simply expanded self-love. A cosmopolitan disposition is a long-term result of helping adolescents to form their own moral characters, defined as “the aptitude (*Fertigkeit*) of acting according to maxims […] of humanity (*Menschheit*)” (Päd, AA 09: 481), “the steadfast commitment to virtue that is realized through a resolute conduct of...
thought \((\text{Denkungsart})\). A shared moral predisposition turns humans all over the world into equals. Their possible efforts to cultivate their respective moral potential turn them into fellow-beings of a global moral community. The overall result is an educational theory that is cosmopolitan in character.

The cornerstone of Kant’s theory is the concept of vocation, taken over from Spalding and his contemporaries. In his Lectures on pedagogy (1803), for instance, Kant wrote:

Many germs lie within humanity, and now it is our business to develop the natural dispositions proportionally and to unfold humanity from its germs and to make it happen that the human being reaches his vocation (Päd, AA 09: 445; see also V-Anth/Collins, AA 27: 470-1).17

Humanity \((\text{die Menschheit})\) mentioned in the quotation is the intelligible, moral element in humans or rational beings (cf. Anth, AA 09: 442). Later in the lectures, Kant emphasised the same cluster of ideas: humans themselves have to develop their dispositions, since “Providence has not placed them already finished” in them (ibid., 446); the ultimate vocation is morality, but cultivated “proportionally” in combination with prudence and skillfulness.

This is a dynamic process: Kant held that for individuals, cultivation, civilization and moralization or moral formation are part and parcel of a process. This dynamic element is also hinted at by Kant when he writes that “[f]ormerly, human beings did not even have a conception of the perfection which human nature can reach. We ourselves are not even yet clear about this concept” (ibid., 445). There is a cognitive aspect, since humans have the task to develop a proper concept of education, which has the potential to become a science, that is, a systematic and coherent theory.

The tenets of Kant’s cosmopolitical education can be summarized as follows. He developed a broad concept of education; he agreed with the civic republicans that education was indispensable for genuine morality; he subscribed to their belief in law’s educational function; he held that a republic – or rather the republican constitution – was the proper basis and condition of moral formation; he believed that he followed Rousseau in constructing a rooted form of cosmopolitan formation (I am going to deal with some of these claims in the

First, Kant developed a broad concept of education; places of education were not only families, schools and universities. Equally important was the education in the (republican) state, namely civic education – in particular the way the constitution “invisibly” educated its citizens. Education in a broad sense also included self-education (as depicted in the novel Robinson Crusoe, 1719), education in a friendship, in a society, as a member of a church community. Even dinner parties – as Kant described them – had a pedagogical function, could serve as opportunities to practice hospitality, to cultivate self-discipline, “mutual respect and benevolence” (Anth, AA 07: 281), and to promote “true humanity” (Anth, AA 07: 278). Kant explicitly claimed that social intercourse includes a cosmopolitan dimension. As Paul Formosa put it, “Friendship, enlightenment and cosmopolitanism, as well as virtue and happiness, all achieve their union only in a society that revolves around universal conversation between equals.”

A pleasant dinner party could be an anticipation of this universal society. Public deliberations as well as private conversations can prepare the ground for the cultivation of one’s moral character and the attainment of virtue.

Secondly, education or formation is indispensable for morality. “The human being can only become human through education. He is nothing except what education makes out of him” (Päda, AA 09: 443). This looks like an extreme formulation, and seems to conflict with the idea of autonomy. Yet if the term “education” is understood in a broad sense, and includes, for instance, self-education, then the statement makes sense. Humans can realize their vocation or calling only through education, the stepping stone of autonomy. The process of moral formation includes the following phases: there is the germ for the good at the beginning (Rel, AA 06: 27 and 45), together with the natural propensity to evil. In society, people cultivate what Kant calls discipline, imperatives of skilfulness (Geschicklichkeit) and prudence (Klugheit), learning how to use other people for their own ends (Päda, AA 09: 455). The ultimate goal is the acquisition and cultivation of a moral conduct of thought, and the cultivation of virtue, a process that culminates in the idea of a moral character or virtue.

Third, reason is in need of cultivation which “needs attempts, practice and instruction in order gradually to progress from one stage of insight to another” (IaG, AA 08: 19; cf. MAM, AA 08: 115 and Päda, AA 09: 445). This is the

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20 See for instance Munzel, Kant’s Conception of Moral Character, pp. 279-88 and Formosa: From Discipline to Autonomy.
empirical side of the gradual progress towards perfection (the idea of progress is an assumption based on our reflective power of judgment). In educational theory, this requires, for instance, experiments (cf. Päda, AA 09: 451) and the conscious attempt to turn education into a science (ibid., 447). Since the development of all natural predispositions takes place in time, some forms of government are better suited to promote this development than others.

Finally, Kant’s cosmopolitanism is rooted and dynamic. The rooted element can be traced back to Rousseau’s influence, and, indirectly, to the civic humanists. Kant’s juridical and moral cosmopolitanism is compatible with thin forms of patriotism. In a manner reminiscent of Rousseau, Kant criticized the indifferent Weltliebhaber, “because of too much generality, he scatters his affection and entirely loses any particular personal devotion” (AA 17: 673). Kant advocated a form of civic and moderate patriotism with citizens enjoying legal freedom and equality and regarding “the commonwealth as the maternal womb” (TP, AA 08: 291). The commonwealth, where citizens are “authorized to protect its rights by laws of the common will”, is the opposite of despotism or a paternalistic government (ibid.). The common bond is formed by republican principles, not an ethnic or national identity, and civic republicanism is therefore compatible with forms of cosmopolitanism. This way Kant offers a form of rooted cosmopolitanism, with people identifying with the local and the embedded, while also conceiving themselves in terms of universal obligations and rights. In an unpublished note, Kant claimed that “national illusion (Nationalwahn)” had to be eradicated and should be replaced by patriotism and cosmopolitanism (Refl. 1353, AA 15: 591). The principled patriot is cosmopolitan (AA 15: 873).

Kant’s pedagogics is situated between the Scylla of indoctrination and the Charybdis of utter helplessness. This becomes obvious if we compare Kant with some representatives of German romanticism. As Frederick Beiser has put it, its key paradox was

its utter commitment and devotion to the education of humanity, and yet its recognition that it cannot and should not do anything to achieve it. We are left, then, with a striking gap between theory and practice, which it

\[\text{21 G. Cavallar: Weltbürgerliche Gesellschaft: Kant’s rooted cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitan education, in preparation.}\]


Many romantics were stuck with the dilemma that freedom cannot be taught. This is true, yet the claim has to be qualified. Education cannot guarantee the cultivation of autonomy or virtue, but can facilitate it – in spite of all coercion. Instructors or teachers should not manipulate their students, but they can influence the conditions that shape the development of one's moral character.25

My claim that Kant develops a concept of education in a broad sense in his writings and lectures is at odds with the standard interpretation of his moral philosophy, namely, that it is individualist and close to contemporary understandings of individualism and political liberalism. I am critical of these attempts, but I do not have the space to go into this any further. Let me just point out that several interpreters in recent years have offered substantial criticisms of the standard interpretation.26

III. Kant’s vision of progress in a genuine republic

I want to start with a caveat: “The philosophy of history is now widely believed to be extinct. How could anyone take seriously the idea of progress in the wake of the bloodiest century on record, in the faces of its 100 million victims?”27 After the Holocaust, the philosophy of history can only be critical, tentative, and moral: wary of its tendency to wind up with dogmatic metaphysics; cautious with any predictions about the future; careful that individuals are not turned into mere means of progress, “sacrificed at the altar of world history”. Kant’s philosophy of history tells the story of the gradual development of human predispositions (Anlagen), the cultivation of our cognitive faculties, the establishment of political communities which have a duty to reform themselves to approach the spirit of a republic, and ultimately to form republics. A similar kind of reasoning is applied to religious communities, educational systems, and international relations – all of

them are supposed to reform themselves to approach the ideal of reason.28

The Endzweck or Bestimmung (vocation) of the human race is of course morality. Kant claimed that he was the first philosopher to have found the one and only method of proper moral formation.29 He criticized teachers in the past who “have not brought their concepts to purity, but, since they want to do too well by hinting everywhere for motives to moral goodness, in trying to make their medicine really strong they spoil it” (GMS, AA 04: 410 note). For example, moral education would traditionally rely on threats or punishments, for instance with the claim that evil-doers wind up in hell, whereas good people will be rewarded in heaven. The result can only be heteronomy of the will, not autonomy. Kant called this mixing of morals with theology and “empirical inducements” (GMS, AA 04: 410). Kant’s own methodology is completely opposed to this approach. The moral law, he asserts, should be taught “by way of reason alone” (ibid.). This is the “autocracy of reason”: reason is not only self-legislating, it can also serve as an incentive and become practical. Kant added the psychological hypothesis that this rational and pure method is much more efficient than the mixing of rational and empirical/pragmatic elements, as its “influence on the human heart” is more powerful (ibid.) and “elevates the soul” (GMS, AA 04: 410 note). Now Kant apparently believed that the Enlightenment was a stage in human history where people would gradually come to realize the truth behind this method, that this was the one and only method of proper moral education. Phrases like “those of us who are working on”30 probably suggest that Kant saw himself as part of this Enlightenment “project” or movement. There are passages where Kant was fairly pessimistic in terms of the likelihood of the realization of this moral goal; he occasionally denied that moral progress was possible; all we could hope for was legal progress (cf. SF, AA 07: 91).

In a first step, it is crucial to overcome the familiar cliché that Kantian ethics are individualist, solipsistic, static, and unconcerned about ends. A string of recent interpreters have challenged this cliché, and suggested that if there is a reduced


29 See especially Koch, Kants ethische Didaktik, to whom I am much indebted; Cavallar, Sphären und Grenzen der Freiheit, and Roth and Surprenant, Kant and Education.

account of human agency in the *Groundwork*, then only for methodological reasons. They claim that Kant’s mature position is not that of solipsistic, but that of public, intersubjective and communicative reason, and that Kantian morality entails the opening up towards the world, either (only) “in thought” or also (and more importantly) in practice, by checking the validity of our judgements with the help of others (cf. Anth, AA 07: 219). Judgements are exercised in interaction with others, and the enlarged conduct of thought even requires others and their divergent perspectives. Kant’s notion of autonomy is social or relational – that is, embedded in the context of the moral agent’s relationship to other rational beings – rather than individualist in the sense of an unencumbered, isolated rational agent.

The relationship between republicanism and cosmopolitical formation is of course complex. I want to start with two theses:

1. Republicanism, as a system of external, enforceable and equal laws cannot have a direct influence on moral formation, internal freedom or virtue.
2. Yet republicanism can have an indirect and beneficial influence.

I divide my discussion into three possible spheres of influence: republicanism and peace; publicity and the process of Enlightenment; the pedagogical function of the republican constitution.

First, despotic states are prone to wage wars – which are the scourge of the human race – and tend to spend too much money on the military. They hinder possible legal or educational progress (see for instance IaG, AA 08: 26, ZeF, AA 08: 367). Genuine republics, by contrast, are inherently peaceful – it is more likely that they contribute to the highest political good (ibid., 349-353). The cultivation of our germs and predispositions requires “an immense series of generations, each of which transmits its enlightenment to the next” (IaG, AA 08: 19), and this difficult and slow process is only possible in a condition that can be characterized with the phrases “rule of law”, “republicanism” and “global peace” – in short, in “a universal cosmopolitan condition” (IaG, AA 08: 28). In the *Conflict of the Faculties*, Kant formulated this argument in favour of the republican constitution as follows: “at least negatively, progress toward the better is assured humanity in spite of all

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31 See also Keienburg, *Immanuel Kant und die Öffentlichkeit*, Moran, *Community and Progress* and Rossi, *The Social Authority of Reason*.

its infirmity, for it is at least left undisturbed in its advance” (SF, AA 07: 86). True republicans are also cosmopolitans, insofar as they do not care about the military glory or reputation of one's state, but concern themselves with the “best of the world” or the “whole of the world”, at least indirectly, for instance, by promoting reforms at home (see Päda, AA 09: 448, AA 15: 627-9).

Secondly, the republican form of government is more likely to create a public sphere and promote the process of Enlightenment.33 In one of his essays for the Berlinische Monatsschrift, Kant asked rhetorically:

Yet how much and how correctly would we *think* if we did not think as it were in community with others to whom we *communicate* our thoughts, and who communicate theirs with us! Thus one can very well say that this external power which wrenches away people's freedom publicly to *communicate* their thoughts also takes from them the freedom to *think* - that single gem remaining to us in the midst of all the burdens of civil life, through which alone we can devise means of overcoming all the evils of our condition (WDO, AA 08: 144; cf. WA, AA 08: 37).

Kant defended the strong claim that humans all over the world share the same formal cognitive structures a priori, also in moral terms. This shared capacity can only be actualized if a public sphere is established. An individual is an animal capable of reason, an *animal rationabile* (*vernunftbegabt*), and needs others to find out whether what she or he thinks indeed reflects “common human reason”, *die allgemeine Vernunft* or requires amendment, improvement or rejection. The reason of others is one indispensable touchstone of truth. This public sphere is global in principle, since bounded communities only have a provisional legitimacy. In the Enlightenment essay, for instance, Kant equals “the public” with “the world” (WA, AA 08: 37, 38, 41). The public sphere is outlined by Kant as the idea of a world-wide legal community (the society or republic of states) and the more challenging idea of a world-wide moral community (the ethical commonwealth).

The public sphere encompasses three dimensions in Kant's political philosophy.34 First, just maxims in politics require publicity. Governments have a duty to cultivate maxims that pass the test of publicity; citizens have the corresponding right to express their own opinion. The “freedom of the pen” is

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34 For the following see Keienburg, *Immanuel Kant und die Öffentlichkeit der Vernunft*, pp. 23-42 and pp. 167-8.
“the sole palladium of the people’s rights” (TP, AA 08: 304; see also Anth, AA 07: 128-9) and censorship contradicts the idea of the original contract. Justice can be thought of “only as publicly known” (ZeF, AA 08: 381). The principle of publicity concretizes the enlarged way of thinking (see below). Publicity is not only a thought experiment, but ultimately requires discourse, debate, an actual public sphere, and the control of politics via public criticism. This in turn can only happen in a republican form of government.

Secondly, the public sphere encompasses the general public of (active) citizens who have started to enlighten themselves and to form so-called “public opinion”. The proper general public is the “world of readers”, ultimately the community or “society of citizens of the world”, where the use of reason is free, in contrast to the passive, private and heteronomous reason of subjects such as civil servants who obey orders in a “mechanical” fashion (WA, AA 08: 37-8). This is a sphere beyond the authority of the government. Despotism does not leave room for it, only the republican form of government does. Kant’s example is the “enlightened absolutism” of Frederick II of Prussia, who, for instance, allowed intellectuals and clergymen to debate the merits and disadvantages of a new hymnbook for the Berlin parishes at the beginning of the 1780ies. The public sphere is also a vehicle of Enlightenment. Testing one’s own judgement with the help of others may help us to transcend logical egoism (see below). “The opposite of egoism can only be pluralism, that is, the way of thinking in which one is not concerned with oneself as the whole world, but rather regards and conducts oneself as a mere citizen of the world” (Anth, AA 07: 130).

Finally, the public sphere encompasses the activities of the general public which aims at constituting itself as the general will. Representation is the mediating principle between this public sphere and the government, which is bound to act “as if” its maxims could be willed by the citizens.

Third, the republican constitution has a pedagogical function. The citizens’ participation in a republican commonwealth guaranteeing and fostering the public use of reason will in all likelihood cultivate their predispositions (Anlagen) for practical reasoning. In particular, a republican form of government might help citizens to train the three maxims of the enlarged way of thinking, namely thinking for oneself, assuming the perspective of others and thinking consistently. There are various reasons for this: the republican citizens are...

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36 Munzel, Kant’s Conception of Moral Character, pp. 321-333.
helped by the form of their government to become capable of self-legislation in the sphere of politics. A republic is by definition based on legal equality, and this prepares the ground for the idea of moral equality central to the idea of the ethical commonwealth. As a consequence, Kant rejected any hereditary aristocracy and thus implicitly the ancien régime as incompatible with the idea of juridical equality (MSRL, AA 06: 329, TP, AA 08: 292, 297, Zef, AA 08: 351 note). Cosmopolitan formation also encompasses becoming familiar with and learning to appreciate the ideas of right and political freedom, and these ideas are – if only imperfectly – approximated in the republic. The capacity for enlarged thinking has to be linked with a moral attitude (ideally, with a version of cognitive moral cosmopolitanism). This is in turn compatible with Rousseau’s concept of civic patriotism, which focuses on the rule of law, mutual respect, and the reciprocal rights and duties of citizens. Judgements are exercised in interaction with others, and the enlarged conduct of thought even requires others and their divergent perspectives.\(^{38}\) The Kantian republic is the perfect training ground in this respect. Ideally, judgement eventually becomes “a habit” (KpV, AA 05: 159, see also 05: 154-5). In spite of some differences, civic education and moral formation share a common basis: both demarcate spheres of freedom; both cultivate or train the power of judgement; both cultivate forms of freedom.\(^{39}\)

Let me stop here for a moment and point out two possible misunderstandings. The first misunderstanding assumes that the republican constitution guarantees that – active - citizens become “on the whole […] more virtuous” and bring “a community of agents closer to the highest good”, as Kate Moran claims.\(^{40}\) Kant would never have asserted that there is a clear causal relationship (this would be uncritical); all we can know is that these efforts might promote (moral) legality or even morality. The second misunderstanding is the basis of the first. Again in the words of Kate Moran, it is believed that the main advantage of the republican constitution lies in the fact that “it can help provide background conditions that make virtuous action easier” since it forces criminals to comply with the law, and an “honest person” would not suffer by being virtuous.\(^{41}\) This is a problematic interpretation of Kant’s doctrine. It blurs the distinction between right and morality and implies that moral formation is all about making it more likely in the realm of experience. In the first place, however, moral formation is about step-

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\(^{39}\) In the case of civil education, the external freedom of choice, in the case of moral education, moral or transcendental freedom; see Cavallar, Sphären und Grenzen der Freiheit, pp. 62-7 for more.

\(^{40}\) Moran, *Community and Progress*, p. 240.

\(^{41}\) Ibid. pp. 210 and 209.
by-step, gradual and long-term character formation. Put bluntly, the republican constitution is not useful because it teaches citizens that “crime doesn’t pay” and morality does pay, it is useful because it might help citizens to understand that morality is not about usefulness, it might help them to cultivate moral judgement and the enlarged way of thinking. The republican constitution has a genuine pedagogical or didactical function.

A republican commonwealth will in all likelihood combat the tendency toward logical egoism, the “prejudice of excessive trust placed in oneself” (Log AA 24: 187; see also Anth, AA 07: 129-30 and 219) as well as its opposite, the prejudice of passivity or imitation, where the judgements of others are simply imitated or accepted as true without further scrutiny (Log 24: 188). We can combat the tendency to make wrong judgements only when communicating with others, which is more likely in a republican form of government. A priori elements in themselves are true, and the senses can neither be true nor false (because no judgement is involved). Yet the judgements of our understanding (Verstand, intellectus) may be wrong, since “error is effected … through the unnoticed influence of sensibility on understanding, through which it happens that the subjective grounds of the judgment join with the objective ones” (KrV B 350). When communicating with others in public we form “a common world”, and can find out whether our thoughts or judgments “also agree with the understanding of others; for otherwise something merely subjective … would easily be taken for something objective” (Anth, AA 07: 219).

In a section on “permissible moral illusion”, Kant asserts that civilized humans are inclined to adopt the illusion of a moral disposition, by pretending, for instance, that they respect others. Kant does not see this as a major problem. In the first place, nobody is deceived by this since everybody is familiar with the deception coming from others. In addition, moral illusion has the potential for fostering a moral disposition. “For when human beings play these roles, eventually the virtues, whose illusion they have merely affected for a considerable length of time, will gradually really be aroused and merge into the dispositions” (Anth, AA 07: 151). A culture of respect is more likely in a republican state.42

IV. Conclusion

I have argued in this essay that according to Kant, successful moral formation is facilitated by the republican constitution. This leads to the following antinomy:

Thesis: moral formation is the product of the republican constitution (and of

favourable cosmopolitical conditions).

Antithesis: moral freedom constitutes “the transcendental condition for the possibility” of political freedom.43

The antithesis is developed by Felicitas Munzel in her work, especially in her recent book, *Kant’s Conception of Pedagogy* (2012). She puts the emphasis on the inner self and its possible corruption by self-interest and egoism that threaten personal integrity. Political liberty presupposes moral freedom, the free capacity to contribute to the highest good. The danger is not only political despotism; it is also the despotism of self-interest and a corrupt *Denkungsart*. Munzel writes that only where honest Socratic examination is freely exercised, where the inner freedom of integrity of the morally well-ordered conduct of thought, of the integrity of the honest and upright character, reigns, will the political, civil right of free speech be realized as a genuine freedom.44

I can only hint at a possible solution of this antinomy here:45 moral or inner freedom and formation on the one hand and political freedom and cosmopolitical conditions on the other are mutually dependent. The thesis has to be qualified along the lines of Kantian criticism: moral freedom (and thus formation) is the *possible outcome* of the republican constitution. Republics help their citizens to take “a great step … toward morality”, but this “is not yet a moral step” (*ZeF*, AA 08: 376 note) – a step that can only be taken as an act of inner freedom. Any republic also depends on the moral characters of its citizens. The antithesis brackets Kant’s insistence that the cultivation of moral freedom in part depends on certain external factors which he summarized under the term “cosmopolitan condition” (*IaG*, AA 08: 28). Yet Kant repeatedly emphasized that the stage of cultivation, civilization and quasi-republican government in the best of cases leads to an individual “of good morals”, not necessarily to “a morally good human being” (*RGV*, AA 06: 30, *IaG*, AA 08: 26).

Finally, I want to point out that I do not share Kant’s optimism concerning progress in ethical didactics and republican governments. I also do not share his hope that “the times during which equal progress takes place will … become always shorter” (*ZeF*, AA 08: 386). Republican democracies in our world tend to degenerate into oligarchies or democracies in the Kantian sense, that is, states

43 Munzel, *Kant’s Conception of Pedagogy*, p. XVI.
45 See also the discussion in Munzel, *Kant’s Conception of Moral Character*, pp. 177-83.
with despotic forms of government \((ZeF, AA 08: 352-3)\). Current trends in educational sciences show a new pragmatism and utilitarianism, a focus on skills, prudence, efficiency and usefulness for the labour market, while abandoning the idea of moral formation or \textit{Bildung} the way Kant envisioned it.

**Summary**

**Res publica: Kant on Cosmopolitical Formation (Bildung)**

This paper argues that a widespread interpretation of Kant as a typical early liberal is mistaken. Especially because of Rousseau’s influence, Kant is close to the republican tradition, even though he does not share its key features. Kant’s pedagogy is indeed distinct from the educational theories of the civic republicans: first of all, moral self-legislation and self-motivation ultimately aim at a cosmopolitan conduct of thought (\textit{Denkungsart}) and a cosmopolitan compartment of mind or disposition (\textit{Gesinnung}), thus going beyond the civic humanism’s focus on one’s own republic. Secondly, Kant takes a detour: in his moral theory, cosmopolitan values are not simply instilled or inculcated in pupils. A cosmopolitan disposition is a long-term result of helping adolescents to form their own moral characters. Yet Kant shared with civic republicans, especially with Rousseau, the conviction that education was indispensable for morality and virtue; subscribed to their belief in law’s educational function; and held that a republic – or rather the republican form of government – was the proper basis of moral formation. A final section outlines Kant’s vision of progress in a genuine republic.

**Keywords:** formation – cosmopolitanism – republicanism – the highest political good

**Zhrnutie**

**Res publica: Kant o svetoobčianskej výchove (Bildung)**

Kanta často charakterizujú ako jedného z prvých liberálov – a práve túto tézu posudzuje tento príspevok. Kant, najmä pod Rousseauovým vplyvom, zdieľa s republikánskou tradíciou niektoré, aj keď nie všetky, názory. Kantova pedagogika sa v mnohých ohladoch líši od výchovných zásad občianskych republikánov. Po prvé, morálne sebazákonodarstvo a sebamotivácia vedie
k svetoobčianskemu spôsobu zmýšľania a svetoobčianskym postojom, čo výslovne presahuje rámec občianskeho humanizmu vo vlastnej republike. Po druhé, Kant postupuje nepriamo: v jeho morálnej didaktike sa „svetoobčianske hodnoty“ len tak jednoducho nesprostredkovávajú ani nezdôrazňujú. Svétoobčiansky postoj je neistým výsledkom dlhodobého pokusu pomáhať mladistvým pri budovaní ich morálneho charakteru. Kant však s občianskymi republikánmi, najmä s Rousseauom, zdieľal presvedčenie, že výchova k morálke a cnosti je nevyhnutná; že právo plní výchovnú funkciu; že republika, resp. republikánska forma vlády, tvorí základ mravnej výchovy (Bildung). Posledný odsek načrtáva Kantovu víziu pokroku v takejto republike.

Klúčové slová: mravná výchova (Bildung) – kozmopolitizmus – republikanizmus – najvyššie politické dobro

Zusammenfassung

Res publica: Kant über kosmopolitische Bildung


Schlüsselwörter: Bildung – Kosmopolitismus – Republikanismus – das höchste politische Gut
Res publica: Kant on Cosmopolitical Formation (Bildung)

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